

Tin Cutting

1. Wear eye protection. I now use a full face shield. Brush your clothing and hair out BEFORE you take the eye protection off. I have had 2 small metal bits in the eye and the last one rusted so they had to grind it out (using a mini Dremel!)
2. Use a Dremel #545 Diamond wheel. They are about the size of a quarter and very thin. The wheel is coated with diamond dust on the edge and both flat surfaces. This lets you use the surface to cut also. You can trim up to about 1/16" using the surface.
3. Decide where you want your final cut. If your final lines are just straight lines, you can do the cutting in one step; if not (i.e. a Bear tin), first cut out inside your final design. Use a slicing cut motion to cut from your preliminary opening to your final cut line. You can also use the wheel surface as mentioned above to smooth along curve lines.
4. Use high speed. Ease the wheel into the tin, it will start a slice. Cut slowly - the faster you cut the hotter the tin gets which can cause the paint to burn and discolor. Be aware of the direction of rotation of the wheel. If you are right handed, it is definitely easier. Cut so that the cutting edge of the wheel is the edge that is rotating into the tin. There are times that you will have to cut using the back (or upward spinning) edge, just go extra slow.
5. When cutting into an existing cut line, i.e. doing a square and cutting the second side up to the first, be aware that just when you hit the already cut line, the blade may move forward easier and thus jump and catch the edge of the already cut line. This can lead to jumping out and skidding across your tin leaving an ugly scratch and some very "blue" air :-)
6. Brace the Dremel with both hands as you cut. I hold the tin with my left hand and use my left thumb as an additional brace to steady the Dremel in my right hand.
7. Practice on an old tin first.

That's about it - tin cutting in one easy lesson. Hope this has helped.

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